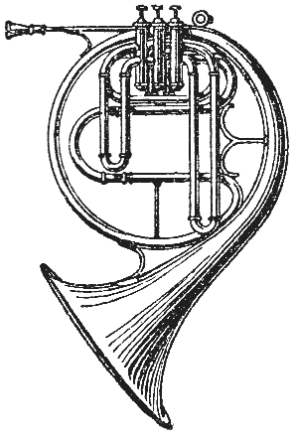
Mosman Orchestra

Inspired

Andrew Del Riccio – Conductor
Claire Cameron – French Horn

Mozart: Overture to The Magic Flute
Richard Strauss: Horn Concerto No.1
Beethoven: Three Equali
Brahms: Variations on a Theme by Haydn

Mosman Art Gallery
Friday 4th September, 8.00pm
Sunday 6th September, 2.30pm



www.mosmanorchestra.org.au
Sep 09

Message from the Musical Director

Don’t miss Mosman Orchestra’s next concerts!

Friday 20th November 8.00pm & Sunday 22nd November 2.30pm

Andrew Del Riccio - Conductor

Mendelssohn – Overture to A Midsummer Night’s Dream

Chopin – Piano Concerto No.1

Tchaikovsky – Nutcracker Suite

Notes on the Program

Overture to The Magic Flute, K. 620 (1791) **- W.A. Mozart (1756-1791)**

Einstein once said that while Beethoven created his music, Mozart's "*was so pure that it seemed to have been ever-present in the universe, waiting to be discovered by the master."* He likened Mozart's source of inspiration to his own; believing that the laws of nature, including those of relativity and music, were waiting to be plucked out of the cosmos by someone with a sympathetic ear.

There is a kind of mystique surrounding Mozart's last year. Myth-makers, from Mozart's earliest biographers to Peter Shaffer in his play *Amadeus* (later reworked as the Oscar-winning 1984 movie starring F. Murray Abrams and Tom Hulse), have painted a picture of a driven, almost haunted composer who was forced to create by thoughts of guilt or his own impending death. In fact, Mozart spent most of the year 1791 at the height of his musical powers, increasingly an artistic and financial success. This year saw the composition of two fine solo pieces, his final piano concerto and a concerto for clarinet, and dozens of smaller works, from dance music and songs to music for Benjamin Franklin's novelty-instrument, the glass harmonica. Within three months of his death, Mozart completed two operas, *La clemenza di Tito* ("The Clemency of Titus") and *Die Zauberflöte* ("The Magic Flute"). His final work, the *Requiem,* was left incomplete at Mozart's death on December 5, 1791.

The Magic Flute was written in the German tradition of *Singspiel* ("song-play"), with spoken dialogue–instead of Italian-style recitatives–continuing the plots between musical numbers. *Singspiel* was an immensely popular genre in late 18th-century Vienna. These works were often little more than musical pantomimes featuring low comedy and vulgar language, but *The Magic Flute* stands out among all Singspiel both for the quality of its music and for the subtle depth of its plot.

The libretto was written by Mozart's old friend, the acclaimed Shakespearean actor Emmanuel Schikaneder (1751-1812), who himself played the role of Papageno at the opera's first performance held in his humble wooden theatre on the outskirts of Vienna.

The Magic Flute is often known as Mozart's "Masonic opera" - its libretto is full of symbols and ideas drawn from the rituals and philosophy of the Freemasons, of whom both Mozart and Schikaneder were members.

As was Mozart's habit, the ***Overture*** of the *Magic Flute* was composed last, only days before the premiere on September 30, 1791. Three majestic chords from the *tutti* orchestra begin the slow introduction, signalling fanfares that are to be associated with the theme of Mason-like brotherhood in the opera. The following *Allegro* adopts the most orderly form in music, the fugue. A brief return of the chordal fanfares interrupts its momentum, and the resumption of the fugal *Allegro* brings the overture to an exuberant ending.

Horn Concerto No.1 in E-flat Major, Op.11 (1882/83) **– Richard Strauss (1864-1949)**

The first important musical influence in the young Richard Strauss's life was that of his father, Franz, the principal horn of the Munich opera orchestra and widely recognized as one of the finest performers of his era. So lofty was the elder Strauss's reputation that Richard Wagner relied on him to play the first horn parts in the premieres of several of his operas, in spite of the fact that he openly disliked Wagner and, in particular, disparaged the great composer's writing for his instrument.

Richard Strauss was an enormously gifted and ambitious young musician and by 1882 at age 18, had already written such remarkable compositions as a suite for 13 wind instruments, a cello sonata and a violin concerto. He was still in a state of musical "innocence," standing firmly in the tradition of Mozart, Schumann, and Brahms. The discovery of the "new German" school of Wagner and Liszt, which would change his life and his work, did not occur until several years later.

The Horn Concerto #1, which Strauss completed while still a teenager, is his earliest orchestral composition to have secured a lasting place in the repertoire, predating the massive tone poems and grandiose operas which would ultimately secure his place in history.

The work was first presented at the Munich Tonkünstlerverein as a piano reduction, with the composer accompanying his father's pupil Bruno Hoyer. Although the piano reduction is dedicated to Strauss's father, Franz, the orchestral score is dedicated to another eminent horn player and teacher of the time, Oscar Franz. The world premiere of the full orchestral version was in March 1885 in Meiningen, Germany with Hans von Bülow conducting the Meiningen Orchestra and its principal horn, Gustav Leinhos, as soloist.

The work is cast in the traditional pattern of three movements (fast-slow-fast), but the movements follow one another without pauses, ensuring musical and psychological continuity – and discouraging the audience from interrupting with applause, which was still common practice, particularly in concertos. The movements are also linked thematically, anticipating more sophisticated techniques of thematic transformation that Strauss would make use of in his later orchestral works. For example, the opening statement by the solo horn is ignored for the rest of the first movement, but returns in a rhythmically altered form to serve as the primary theme of the finale.

Strauss composed a second concerto at the age of 78, as a late tribute to his father's memory.

Interval

Three Equali (1812) **- Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)**

Andante
Poco Adagio
Poco Sostenuto

The influence that Beethoven had on Brahms was profound, so it is appropriate that in this concert we include Beethoven's *Three Equali*.

Beethoven wrote these three pieces at the suggestion of Franz Xaver Glöggl, music director at the cathedral in Linz. The composer had visited Glöggl's brother, Johann, in 1812, and there was urged by Franz Xaver to write these works. Beethoven asked to hear an equale, which is a piece for equal voices or instruments. This rather arcane genre had become associated with the trombone (it was usually scored for four), and was typically written for solemn occasions, such as funerals. These particular works are thought to have been written for use in an All Souls' Day service.

All three pieces are sombre and slow, written in a style closer to that of Renaissance music than that of most other compositions from Beethoven's middle period. Harmonies are simple and provide little colour, reinforcing a somewhat austere character that pervades the pieces.

The first *equale* has a stately sobriety and hymn-like character, but in the end registers with a funereal quality in its solemnity and quasi-religious sound. The second piece is slower and more ponderous; its glacial pacing and barren sound would relate it more to gray moods than to lugubrious ones. The third entry here is closer in spirit to the second, but the music is less sonorously fluid; it stops, restarts, and stops again, especially in the latter half.

The status of the *Three Equali* as minor works is reinforced by their short duration. Ironically, Ignaz von Seyfried, a friend of the composer and later his biographer, thought highly enough of this music to arrange the first and third equali for four male voices, and used those renditions at Beethoven's funeral in 1827.

Variations on a Theme by Haydn, 'St Anthony Chorale' Op.56a **(1873) - Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)**

In *Theme and Variations* form a composer declares the source of his inspiration by taking a theme – often by another composer – and developing it in a variety of styles. Brahms discussed the nature of this method of composition in a letter to a violinist, Joseph Joachim:

"I sometimes ponder on variation form, and it seems to me it ought to be more restrained, purer. Composers in the old days used to keep strictly to the base of the theme as their real subject. Beethoven varies the melody, harmony and rhythms so beautifully. But it seems to me that a great many moderns….cling nervously to the

melody, but we don't handle it freely, we don't really make anything new out of it, we merely overload it."

Perhaps this was in his mind when he worked on the *St. Anthony* variations. Not only did it mark the turning point in his career as an orchestral composer, it is the first set of independent variations for orchestra by any composer. And in his inventiveness and range, Brahms was far from "clinging nervously" to any theme.

In 1872 Brahms had turned 40, and had recently settled down as the director of the orchestra and choir of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde* (Society of the Friends of Music) in Vienna. Two years earlier his friend C.F. Pohl, a music historian, had introduced Brahms to a set of divertimenti for winds then attributed to Haydn. Brahms liked the theme of the second, called the *Chorale St. Antoni*, and copied the tune in his notebook. Modern scholars now doubt Haydn's authorship of these divertimenti, believing they were possibly written by Haydn's student Ignatz Pleyel.

More relevant is the unusual structure of the theme, which is divided into five-bar phrases. This structure must have immediately attracted Brahms, who preserved it in most of his eight ingeniously wrought character variations.

Throughout the *first variation*, one hears the bell-like repeated notes that end the statement of the theme; around them Brahms weaves flowing counter figures in the three-against-two rhythms that he loved. For the lively *second variation*, he shifts to the minor mode and exploits the opening long-short rhythmic figure of the theme. Returning to the major, *Variation 3* flows peacefully, with a lovely lifting sensation caused by regrouping the phrase structure into six-bar lengths, followed by four-bar lengths. Shifting again to minor, *Variation 4* shows Brahms' formidable contrapuntal skill while maintaining a wonderful, lyrical flow. The impetuous *fifth variation*, based on the start of the theme, imparts a scherzo-like character, and the lively *sixth variation* suggests the hunt with its horns and galloping rhythms. The lilting Siciliano rhythm of the exquisite *seventh variation* provides a great contrast. The *eighth* is a fleeting, whispered variation of mysterious character. For his *Finale*, Brahms fashions a repeating bass pattern from the theme, which he then repeats 16 times with varied harmonies and figurations above it — like a Baroque *passacaglia*. The return of the *Chorale* theme in all its glory constitutes one of Brahms' greatest moments.

* * * * * * *

Andrew Del Riccio - Music Director, Mosman Orchestra

Andrew Del Riccio holds degrees in performance from the NSW State Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, in conducting from the University of British Colombia (Canada) and in Education from the University of Western Sydney. He has received scholarships that enabled him to study at the Schola Cantorum Basiliensis in Switzerland, The Boston Conservatory, and conducting master courses in the Czech Republic and in London.

Andrew has performed with many of Sydney's leading ensembles including the *Sydney Symphony* and *Opera Australia*, as well as founding the *Blues Point Brass Quintet* and a heraldic trumpet ensemble. His conducting interests have led to the formation of ensembles in Australia and Canada. With the *Mosman Orchestra* Andrew has conducted world premieres of works by Michiel Irik and Mathew Chilmaid. Recently, he has worked with the *UNSW orchestra & Concert Band*, *Lane Cove Youth*, *Strathfield* and *North Sydney SOs* and directed concerts as an assistant conductor with the *Willoughby Symphony Orchestra*.

Andrew currently teaches at Trinity Grammar School, has a busy private teaching practice. He performs with the WIN-Wollongong Symphony Orchestra as principal trumpet is also heavily involved in scuba diving, actively researching wrecks of the New South Wales coast as a part of *The Sydney Project*.

Claire Cameron

Claire Cameron began playing the French horn in 1994 when she was a student at Queenwood School for Girls in Mosman. She was an active member of the school's instrumental and vocal ensembles until completing her HSC in 2000. During this time she also played with the Sydney Youth Philharmonic Orchestra and Sydney Youth Brass.

Claire returned to playing horn when she joined the University of NSW Orchestra and Wind Band, and in 2008 commenced a Bachelor of Music degree at UNSW which she hopes to complete next year. During the last 2 years Claire has received instruction from Steven Hillinger and Saul Lewis and is currently studying with Robert Johnson, Principal Horn in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra.

Since 2007 Claire has enjoyed playing with many ensembles in Sydney, including The Occasional Performing Orchestra (TOPS), Strathfield Symphony Orchestra, Orchestra 143, the Bourbaki Ensemble and various chamber groups.

She is currently performing with the Metropolitan Chamber Orchestra, TOPS, North Sydney Symphony Orchestra, the UNSW Orchestra and Wind Band and the Mosman Orchestra.

“Strauss’s Horn Concerto no 1 in Eb is a work which brilliantly fuses both the simplicity and complexity of the horn,” says Claire. ‘It calls for all the character of a valveless horn, whilst being almost unplayable on anything other than the valved horns that are standard today.

“I am delighted to be making my first solo appearance performing this work which is, in so many ways, ***Inspired.”***

Mosman Orchestra

First Violin: Cameron Hough (concertmaster), Geoff Allars, Margaret Duncan, Emily Jones, Alex Koustobardis, Beres Lindsay, Rebecca Rock, Ian Watson
Second Violin: Ruth Day, Chris Bladwell, Denis Brown, Bob Clampett, Talitha Fishburn, David Healey, Julia Jenkins, Alison Meades, Brett Richards
Viola: Mark Berriman, Ben Cheung, Sam Loukas, Vicki Sifniotis
Cello: Megan Corlette, Rufina Ismail, Daniel Morris, Edna Rubinstein
Double Bass: Trevor Dalziell, Mark Szeto
Flute: Carolyn Thornely, Linda Entwistle, Jacqueline Kent
Piccolo: Linda Entwistle
Oboe: Cate Trebeck, Nina Herkommer
Clarinet: Danika Allars, Natalie Jacobs,
Bassoon: Bob Chen, Graham Cormack
Contra-Bassoon: ???
French Horn: Claire Cameron, Rana Wood, Martin ??? Kelly McGuiness, Tek Xin Chua
Trumpet: Kate Wilson, Jarrah Coleman-Hughes
Trombone: Greg Hanna, Hanno Klein, Vicki Sifniotis, Lauren Smith,
Percussion: Graham Ball, Greg Hanna